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THAT 1804 DOLLAR

THE most mysterious and tantalizing coin known to numismatists is the 1804 dollar. It is continually being "discovered" by lucky collectors, and only lately, it came to the front again through the medium of the following paragraph, which has been quoted all over the country.

"The missing dollar of 1804 is said to have turned up. In that year but four silver dollars were coined. The whereabouts of three of these have long been known to coin collectors, but the fourth has been missing. Dr. Edward Walthier of St. Paul, Minn., is now advertised to have found the long lost piece in the possession of an aged Norwegian living in the Southern part of the State, who had kept the piece in the depths of a stocking for many years. The doctor paid \$150 for the dollar. It is quoted in coin catalogues at \$300."

There is about as much false information published to the world in the above as is possible in so few lines, writes F. G. M., in the Meriden, Conn. *Republican*. It is time some one who knows, should correct these statements and let the public know the facts about the celebrated 1804 dollar. It is true there is some difficulty in obtaining the facts, and some obscurity as to the number of these dollars that have been minted. The article above says that only four of the dollars were struck in that year. There were none struck. The die was undoubtedly made for a dollar of 1804, but none were issued.

The die for the half dollar of the same year was made, but who ever saw a half dollar of 1804? We know the die was manufactured, for the next year an 1805 half dollar was struck which plainly shows the four under the five. To go back to the 1804 dollar; I have a record of ten of these dollars, of undoubted genuineness, and names of the owners and place of residence can be furnished. So much for the story published above. Perhaps the readers of this paper would like some of the facts connected with the issue of this dollar. It was probably first struck about 1840.

The mint at Philadelphia has one of the first, and a Mr. Stickney, of Salem, Mass., had influence enough to have one struck for his collection. He gave the mint in exchange rare and valuable colonial coins. Mr. Stickney is now between eighty and ninety years old, and the probability is strong that his specimens

may be soon on the market. Other well known collectors also obtained the dollar for their cabinets. Later some of the mint workmen, unbeknown to the authorities, so it is said, surreptitiously struck off a few more; how many is not certainly known. When this came to the ears of the authorities strenuous efforts were made to reach and call them in. A few were found, but the problem still remains as to how many may yet come to light. The original dies were destroyed in 1869. One dollar was found in 1884 in Germany, and was sold the next year for \$1,000.

Prices for this dollar have ranged all the way from \$400 to \$1,200. No counterfeit dies of the 1804 dollar were ever made, but many electrotypes and altered dates are in the hands of collectors and dealers of old coins. The writer has examined probably a hundred of these spurious dollars. Many collectors know that their specimens are not genuine, but they allow their friends, who are not posted, to believe they are genuine. The late John T. Raymond was led to purchase one of this kind some years ago in Chicago, for which he paid \$300. A short time since, when his collection was sold, it brought \$5.60, and this because it had once belonged to the famous actor, and not because it was worth anything like that sum.

If the truth could be known, the strong probability is that the dollar found by Dr. Edward Walthier, of St. Paul, in the hands of the "aged Norwegian" would belong to the same category as the Raymond dollar. Two years ago in the city of Meriden, a showman offered for my inspection and purchase an 1804 dollar. He was not sure of its genuineness, but knew if it was, it possessed great value. The writer knew at once it was an altered date—probably from an 1801 dollar. It was well calculated to deceive.

A few months later this identical dollar was found in the hands of a man in Burlington, Vt. His statement was that he found it in Montreal nearly forty years ago, and he had been the owner ever since. Nothing but "impecuniosity" would allow him to part with the dollar. A syndicate was being formed to purchase it on speculation, but one gentleman would not consummate the bargain till the dollar had been submitted to my inspection. Being a personal friend the gentleman had to be told all about the coin and its history. The syndicate went to pieces.

BABBLE OF THE BOULEVARD

(Special Correspondence of THE COLLECTOR)

WHILE the trash that serves to plug the shelves of the bibliophile or stock the stalls of the *bouquiniste* can, as a rule, be appraised for its value as old paper, the intrinsic worth of *first editions* will always find their own level. There is, as far as they themselves are concerned, nothing that might justly be termed a high-water mark; no price is exorbitant that a collector with an evenly-balanced brain is willing to pay, and hence it is only right that many works should be adjudged as priceless. When it comes to volumes that are entirely unique, the figures at which they are frequently sold, no matter how advanced, seem cheap through their very extravagance. Last week was knocked down under the auctioneer's hammer at Bordeaux, a copy of the original edition of Gustave Flaubert's "Madame Bovary" and of "Salammbô." The first-mentioned novel brought \$70; the other a little over \$60. Both volumes contained autographic dedications setting forth that the author presented them to his friend Sénard, a former President of the Constituent Assembly and a noted lawyer of Rouen. From the hands of Sénard the books passed into those of M. Bergier, his son-in-law, who was also a member of the legal profession and who committed suicide at Bordeaux a few months ago. At the same sale a copy of "Salammbô" containing between its pages a letter signed by Flaubert brought \$20.

In that superb intellectual epoch when Victor Hugo was in the full maturity of his powers, when Lamartine and Alfred de Musset were the poets laureate of France; when Thiers and Guizot were supreme in the domain of modern history as Victor Cousin was in that of philosophy; when Alexandre Dumas the elder was subjugating Europe with his enchanting romances; when Sainte-Beuve and Jules Janin were reviving the glories of the essay writers of the eighteenth century, and Chateaubriand and Charles Nodier had scarcely ceased their labors, there appeared in the world of French letters a man, the subtle texture of whose work and the vigorous fibre of whose diction stamped him at once master of an art in which others were but struggling to perfect themselves. The quality of his literary composition, the grace and purity of his expression, the excellence of his style and the ability of extracting from every-day bourgeois life in a provincial village the elements often lacking in the most attractive of romances, marked a writer of exceptional skill. From the dusty highways of

conventionalism, and the tangled underbrush that skirted their margins, he led us deep into the peaceful silence of the leafy woods, with the breath of nature fresh in our nostrils and the murmur of the brooks gurgling in our ears. Far away from the incessant turmoil of the Boulevards, with its babel of tongues and rattle of wheels, it was here, amid the foliage of the forest, that this literary alchemist found the ingredients which were afterwards to be resolved into one of the most vividly written novels in the French language. The man was Gustave Flaubert, the novel "Madame Bovary."

"Madame Bovary" appeared first in the *Revue de Paris* sometime during the year 1856. The copy, thanks to the pen of its editor, M. Pichat, and the kindly suggestions of Maxime du Camp, was hacked and cut almost beyond recognition. Flaubert, who had spent five years in writing the book, and days in search of a single word, wept over this act of vandalism. Yet so great was the intensity of the story, that had its very substance been rent and torn again, something at least would have remained to claim for its author the tribute that was his. Flaubert was a strong admirer of Gautier, but not a follower. Just as "Madame Bovary" gave birth to the school of realism, so did "Mademoiselle de Maupin" end the then highly popular one of romance. True it is that none have handled the dissecting knife with such dexterity and precision as the author of "Salammbô," for while reality was his theme and passion his text, he dyed them in the same tones with which others had painted the ideal. Like Coleridge, he contended that prose, as verse, should have its rhythm. To what extent he lived up to his creed those who read him best can judge. Joy and sorrow, disappointment and death, have been drawn for us by many hands. Vice and intrigue have been pictured in deeper hues than ever nature knew. We turn from these horrors in disgust, and taking up the volume upon which Flaubert spent the best years of his life, look into its glittering depths and see no glaring distortion, no exaggeration, no extravagance, but the clear and limpid reflection of our own image.

Old uniforms and costumes are commanding good prices in the salesrooms of the Hôtel Drouot. Recently were sold a complete series of military costumes from the time of Louis XIII to 1830.

Specially interesting were some Revolutionary waistcoats on which were embroidered the Tree of Liberty and the Phrygian Cap. A sword-belt worn at Waterloo by the First Napoleon brought 91 francs, a musket given by the First Consul to Citizen Thurlot for his bravery at Hohenlinden 160 francs, an Empire umbrella in blue silk 106 francs, and nineteen corsets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from 10 francs to 50 francs each.

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For several years past a number of prominent Parisian artists have had frequent occasion to complain of the rapid discoloration of many of their most important canvases, and a system of warfare has been carried on not only between them and the vendors of colors, but also between the latter and the manufacturers of these articles. At a recent meeting of the artistic fraternity a few days since, a petition was drawn up and addressed to the President of the Municipal Council begging him in the interest of French art to have the various materials sold by the *marchands de couleurs* officially analyzed by the municipal laboratory. In this way the quality of the substances or the raw material employed in their manufacture could be definitely known. Upwards of forty artists have signed the document, among them being MM. Puvis de Chavannes, Jules Lefebvre, Gérôme, Detaille, Benjamin Constant, Gervex, Carolus Duran, J. P. Laurens and Henner. Exactly what will be the result of the affair remains to be seen. The French Republic can guard itself and its inhabitants against the adulteration of sugar, wine and food stuffs. Can it dictate to manufacturers of artists' materials what or what they shall not use in the making of paint?

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In order to render the French public more familiar with the works of modern Dutch painters, the Arts Club of Rotterdam has organized in Paris an exhibition which certainly calls for the highest praise. The exhibit, which is located in the Pavillon de la Ville de Paris, behind the Palais de l'Industrie, and off the Champs Elysées, contains the works of many men who, in spite of their conspicuous talent, are little known outside the land of dykes and windmills. In any notice of modern works from the Netherlands those of Jozef Israëls naturally occupy first place. The great artist is represented by fifteen of his best paintings, nearly all of which are the property of J. Staats Forbes, a gentleman well known to art lovers, more particularly from

the liberal manner in which he is always ready to lend all or a portion of the contents of his gallery for purposes of public exhibition. Among them are the familiar old man and his dog, known in this instance as "Old Friends"—the gem of the collection—"The Fisherman's Wife," "Prayer Before Meat," and "Grandfather's Comfort." Gerke Henkes, whose versatility is not the least conspicuous feature of his talent, sends an interesting selection. His "Dorcas Meeting," showing a group of old women sitting at a table knitting stockings, is full of quaint humor. Two other canvases by the same artist, namely, a "Stoker in a Distillery," with a highly praiseworthy contrast of day and artificial light, and a charming interior, goes far towards proving that the spirit of Teniers still inspires some of his countrymen. Paintings by H. W. Mesdag, Mme. Rönnér and others complete the exhibit.

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L'Illustration publishes this week, as a colored supplement to its unusually interesting pages, a lithographic reproduction of a painting by Edmond Aimé Geoffroy, entitled "La Sortie de l'Ecole." The picture, which represents half a dozen of youngsters, girls and boys, coming out of school in a snow storm, one of those flurries so frequent in Paris during the winter months, is a gem. Nothing has been published in the holiday numbers of the Parisian weeklies that can compare with it, search the Christmas issue of the *Illustration* as well. Geoffroy, who is perhaps best known as a painter of portraits, long since proved himself a master of genre, and no better evidence of the fact could be given than this simple yet charming bit of child life. Those of my readers who can obtain the *Illustration*, if, indeed, it is obtainable in America, will do well to buy it.

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To the general regret of the artistic world, the proposed collective exhibition of the works of Meissonier has, for the present at least, been abandoned, and the committee of arrangements has resigned its functions. Some family troubles or misunderstandings is the reason assigned to its indefinite postponement. The fact undoubtedly is, that Charles Meissonier and his step-mother, who were barely civil to each other while the head of the house was alive, have agreed to permanently disagree now that the restraint of the master has been removed from them.

JOHN PRESTON BEECHER.

PARIS, January 5, 1892.

CANTON CURIOS

(Special Correspondence of THE COLLECTOR.)

CANTON, Nov. 15, 1891.

THIS is the New York of the far east, a great city of at least two million population, and with suburbs containing as many more. It is also the ideal city of the collector. In curios, metal-work and bric-à-brac in general it beats the world. You cannot buy an old master here, or a Barye bronze, a master moulding by Cellini, or an antique Stradivarius. It would be difficult, also, to add to your precious store of Valenciennes and Alençon. But in arms and armor, pipes, canes, buttons, statuary, wood-carvings, porcelain, glass, bronze, silk embroidery, ivory, ebony, jade, agate, silver, gold and precious stones, there is not a city in America or Europe which will compare with this Mongolian metropolis. The mere description of its wares and merchandise would fill the columns of THE COLLECTOR for a decade. And above all, my dear editor, things are cheap. Labor in the east is the cheapest article extant, no matter whether skilled or unskilled. The coolie who carries your chair in the blazing sun, and the artist who consumes a year in fashioning a dozen concentric revolving ivory balls, receive nearly the same miserable pittance for their toil. For \$5,000 a man could fill his house with "objects of virtue and bigotry" and have a collection of as many pieces as dollars. I saw a bronze in Chicago which was priced for \$75 whose original I can buy in Canton for \$3; a Majolica group in New York for \$100 whose copies are for sale here for \$2.50! Why does not the intellectual collector sail westward for his summer vacation instead of going eastward and being fleeced by the multitudinous harpies of Europe?

It is unnecessary to touch upon the fields made familiar to American readers by authors, tourists and dealers. It would be like carrying coals to Newcastle or Pittsburgh. A few words, however, may be of interest upon these things which thus far are comparatively unknown in the United States.

First of all is the humble button. The Celestial connoisseur pays as much attention to these objects as Speaker Husted to his neckties, or Mr. C—V—, of New York, to his two thousand and odd canes. Chinese buttons are invariably round, and as large as a marrow-fat pea. The workingman buys his of tailors, who make them from cotton, linen, silk, hemp, horse-hair, twine and beads. The Chinese gentleman's buttons are more elegant and expensive, being made of jade, agate, onyx, carnelian, crystal, garnet, amethyst, opal, cat's-eye, tiger's-eye, obsidian, silver or gold. They are made in simple globes, polished and shanked. The prices range from 3 cents apiece to \$20 a dozen. They also come engraved with monograms, inscriptions and figures. Such buttons come high, and bring from ten to twenty times the figures named. They also come encrusted with jeweled flakes, precious stones and metals. Most precious of all are silver and gold buttons, which are open-work, hollow spheres, where every bit of metal forms part of leaf, flower, animal or human figure. Imagine a dozen gold buttons at \$250; each button a perfect picture in itself!

Next are what may be called the siliceous stores. They are establishments that deal in ornaments made from the precious and semi-precious varieties of quartz. The artists are experts not satisfied with the products of China, and import raw materials from all parts of the world. The favorite stone in the markets of the empire is jade; next to it are rock crystal, agate and onyx. Then follows the long list of wood-agate, moss-agate, chalcedony, carnelian, chrysoprase, garnet, sardonyx, rose quartz, moonstone, blue flint and the numberless other varieties of silica. Though every kind is hard and brittle, the workers care nothing, but fashion all into ear-rings, breast-pins, watch-charms, bracelets, amulets, statuettes, seals, rings, pen-holders and altar-pieces. I will not mention prices lest I incur the incredulity of some good reader. It will suffice to state, however, that the Cantonese artists produce jade bracelets and agate statues which bring thousands of dollars apiece to their makers.

I met an opium farmer who wore a handsome thumb ring of the finest jade—it looked to me like a green-glass napkin-ring—which he said cost him \$2,200!

What strike the visitor's fancy the most are the odd and pretty little designs in frosted silver. They are exquisitely carved, and in many cases perfectly beautiful: none more than an inch in length, and not heavier than an eighth of an ounce. One series consists of exclusively Chinese subjects, and comprises such every-day things as pagodas, sampans, junks, sedan-chairs, slippers, opium-pipes, swords, hats, halberds, hubble-bubbles, bronzes, rickshaws, umbrellas and the like. Another series of silver ornaments is of distinguished men, and includes miniature effigies of Confucius, Buddha, Zan Zoon, Le-Hung-Chang and other notables, heroic, historic, mythic and actual. A third consists of animals, wild and domestic, and contains the horse, cow, buffalo, pig, dog, goat, sheep, deer, lion, tiger, cat, bear, wolf, fox, aurochs, rat, rabbit, frog, tortoise, serpent, crocodile, shark and whale. Still another is of mythical animals, such as the dragon, griffin, Celestial Dog, Heavenly Poodle, Phoenix and Sacred Bird. These dainty works of art are worn upon bangle-bracelets, necklaces, belts, watch-chains, finger-rings, hairpins and breast-pins. They are also used as parlor ornaments, being exhibited in glass-cases, backed with black velvet. They are as a whole very pretty and very cheap. They seldom cost more than 35 per cent above their weight in silver. They find a ready sale among Chinese women, especially concubines. Some of these wear two and three bracelets on each arm, and cover the circumference with these tiny figures. They are certainly handsomer and more artistic than the "monogrammed" coins with which American girls load their rings and bracelets, and in addition to this virtue, if such it be, would make a very attractive exhibit in the drawing-room of an American home.

EDWARD BEDLOE.